

Mr. C. M. Le Grice Requests to Mr. Hall

*12 B. a 32
265*

PRIZE DECLAMATION,

SPOKEN IN
TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL,

MAY 28, 1794,

ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECT:

RICHARD CROMWELL, IF HE HAD POSSESSED HIS
FATHER'S ABILITIES, MIGHT HAVE
RETAINED THE PROTECTORATE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SPEECH,

DELIVERED DEC. 18, BEING THE DAY OF
PUBLIC COMMEMORATION,
TO PROVE,

THAT THE REIGN OF ANNE HAS BEEN IMPROPERLY
CALLED THE AUGUSTAN AGE OF
ENGLISH GENIUS.

Revocare gradum

Hic labor, hoc opus est.

VIRG.

By C. V. LE GRICE.

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1795.

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P R E F A C E.

*THE smallest Pamphlet is seldom obtruded on the public without the Author's alledging the importunities of Friends as an excuse for his presumption. Where the imputation of vanity may with some reason be dreaded, backnied as the apology is, a better cannot be brought forward. I therefore beg leave to state, that my only inducement to hazard the publication of these Exercises was the following advice of a person high in station and eminent for his classical taste: "I think you should
" publish them, as they might redeem that credit,
" which you have lost among your Friends by your
" late little foolish book." * Whether the reader will coincide with his opinion, I hardly dare conjecture. However—dulce periculum, and*

Those only, whom I reverence, I fear.

C. V. L.

Trin. Coll. Feb. 1795.

* The Tineum.



A

PRIZE DECLAMATION, &c.

T H E S I S :

Richard Cromwell, if he had possessed his Father's abilities, might have retained the Protectorate.

WHEN an event has taken place, and it's consequences have operated in their widest extent, men are ever willing to give proof of their sagacity in discovering the *necessary* concurrence of the causes, which produced it ; and by a kind of after-prophecy affect to have foreseen them. Thus every Historian informs us, that the fall of the Cromwell family was evidently hastening on upon the death of the Protector ; and one even asserts that

the Protector's dying at so critical a time, was the most fortunate circumstance, which ever attended him. Cardinal Mazarine, a contemporary, and one by no means deficient in political sagacity, thought that the Protectorate rested on a firm foundation; and do not we of the present day, who think that Richard, if he had possessed his Father's abilities, could not have retained it, found our reasons rather on what has since followed, than on what at that time might naturally have been expected to ensue?

The abilities of Oliver Cromwell we know. We know them to have been such as enabled the son of a private gentleman to subvert the established government of his country; to bring his King to a public execution; to * "overcome all his enemies by arms, his friends by artifices;" to raise himself to the first power; to support it with respect at home, abroad

* Cowley on the character of Cromwell.

with terror ; and at length to bequeath his dignities and splendour to his posterity.

To point out by what particular methods Richard, if he had possessed such abilities, might have overcome the obstacles, which opposed him, is not in our power : this would require the penetration of Oliver himself, and perhaps too much of his *heart*. Let us therefore examine, whether any such difficulties attacked the son, as never had been conquered by the father ; whether he was ever surrounded by any dangers, through which he might not have steered, if he had been the same “daring pilot in extremity.”

Lambert, a man of equal ambition with Cromwell himself, had anxiously waited the death of that usurper, in expectation of obtaining the same power by the same means. He engaged Fleetwood and Desborough with the Republican party in
the

the army, and those Officers, whom the Protector had discarded, to join in the faction. These very men, whose designs Oliver had penetrated, whose combinations he had prevented, whose conspiracies he had frustrated, did Richard by an unguarded consent convene in a general Council. Instead of weakening them by separation, he gave them strength by uniting them. He granted, what they insisted upon, a dissolution of the Parliament; and from that moment we may date his fall.

“You are the son of Cromwell,” said the brave Howard, “shew yourself worthy to be his son. Vane, Lambert, Fleetwood, and Desborough are the contrivers of all this: rid yourself of them, and my life shall answer for the consequence.”* Nor perhaps, if Richard had ventured to pursue the example, which this bold adviser held before him, should

* Noble's Memoirs of the Cromwell family.

we be now enabled to attribute rashness to the proposal. Was consummate hypocrisy necessary? On that bad eminence his father stood unrivalled. Fleetwood and Fairfax had been his dupes; Lambert himself he had cajoled with the hopes of succession to the Protectorate. Was vigour and promptness of execution? In one instant he had deprived Lambert of his commissions: By means of the Parliament he had annihilated the power of the Major Generals, the very moment it became dangerous to his schemes; and afterwards as suddenly dissolved that Parliament itself. Was personal intrepidity requisite? When a body of Levellers had assembled in open rebellion, Oliver laid two of the most insolent dead at his feet. Would that Oliver patiently have heard a Desborough threaten to drag him from his palace!

On the removal of these four men depended the affection of the soldiers. The
army

army had become mutinous solely from their machinations: it was not attached to their persons, or their cause. For we know that Lambert's authority expired with his commissions; and that when Overton, Rich, and Okey were discarded by Cromwell, their influence, which had hitherto been thought unbounded, was immediately extinguished.

The army was the basis of the Protector's power. Those very Officers, who now weaned it's affections from his son, Oliver had made his instruments in preserving them to himself. Nor yet were they totally weaned: the remains of attachment were still apparent; when the soldiers demanded of the Parliament that the debts of the young Protector should be paid; and that a fortune should be settled on him, * "in order that a mark of
 " the high esteem, which this nation hath
 " for the good services done by our ever

“renowned General, his Father, may remain to posterity.” Who but the incompetent and unambitious Richard would not have taken this tide of his fortune in the flood!

Had Richard secured the army, his power would have been established; and common vigilance alone would have been necessary to preserve it. The people would have submitted to taxes imposed by a government, under which they had seen the nation prosperous at home, and triumphing abroad; and which they now would have been taught to look upon, as no longer precarious. Usurpation softened by succession would have ceased to create alarm. Nay, ’till the flood of sedition rushed in, the generality of the towns and counties strove, which should be most lavish in their praise of the young Protector, and in their professions of good will to his person and government. The jarring sects themselves, amid whose dis-

sensions his power sunk to the ground, jealous only of each other could have brooked a common superior, and in that authority would have acquiesced. Even Lambert, the leader of the Wallingford-House party, the sudden elevation of which provoked the opposition of the rest, when he found that his own ambitious schemes were overturned by a rival power, the Parliament, voluntarily offered his assistance to reinstate the Protector in his dignity. But the Protector knew not, as his father did,

“ When two authorities are up,

“ To enter ’twixt the gap of both, and take

“ The one by t’other.”

SHAKSP. CORIOL.

It has been asserted that the concurring suffrages of the nation demanded the Prince’s return ;—that the Protectorate must have been overthrown by a general movement of the popular mind. Who were the Nation ?—Were the Soldiers ?—They had hurled Richard down not to
raise

raise a King in his stead, but to promote the military above the civil power. Were the Parliament?—They were desirous of advancing their own interests, and of ruling by their own authority. Were the Republicans?—They hated a Protector, but dreaded still more the royal resentment. Were the Independents?—They had voted for the death of Charles. Were the Mob? *—What rule of conduct can be assigned to this monster? The idolatry of the multitude is the constant attendant of good fortune :

“ They praise and they admire they know not what,

“ And know not whom ; but as one leads the other.”

MILT. PAR. REG. b. 3.

The general joy, which spread through all ranks upon the restoration of Charles, adds no strength to the assertion. There are always a great number of those, who are disposed to adhere to any power, which holds out most security.—The rest

* Those who are without sense or virtue in any station.

TOM JONES.

of the nation, amidst continual distraction, were as people amazed or asleep:—with the perpetual revolution of the objects around them their senses had become giddy:—harassed by the tempests of popular commotion they longed for repose:—the mind of the country languid after its convulsive energies sunk into stupor.—The moment was important, the dilemma inevitable. An army was collected in the metropolis, a Parliament was assembled;—they knew not for what. That secret rested in the breast of Monk. As it were by the word of his mouth, an exile, a wanderer, without friends, without power, without influence, without means, poor, deserted, and obscure, was raised to the Sovereignty of the nation. Those honors, and that dignity, which his father had bequeathed to the pusillanimous Richard, were bestowed upon another by a man, who had been the creature of the father, and was willing to have been the

the creature of the son ; but Richard deserted himself, and Monk deserted him. By perseverance in a long course of artifice, of vigour, of intrepidity, and venturous enterprize, opposed to the prejudices of equals, the hatred of rivals, and the conspiracies of the factious, Oliver had raised the Colossus of the Protectorate: resolution, such as he had ever exerted, was alone necessary to preserve it on a firm and sure basis ; but this resolution his successor did not possess :—it tottered and a pebble overthrew it.

Do not think that the powers of men have declined, while
their advantages have increased; and above all do not decide
by ancient authority, what can be brought to the fair test of
modern reason.

DR. AIKIN'S LETTERS. p. 38.

S P E E C H, &c.

TO PROVE

*That the reign of ANNE has been improperly called
the Augustan age of English Genius.*

IT has been remarked that men of genius have generally appeared in considerable numbers at a time; that some ages have been remarkably barren of them, while at other periods nature has poured them forth with profuse fertility. In the annals of every country that particular age, when she saw the united excellencies of her most distinguished sons has been called the *Augustan*; and by the term we understand, that literature and the sciences had then reached that point of perfection,

tion, to which all the efforts of genius, which had hitherto been exerted, had only a tendency; and after which every exertion gave proof of declining strength.

The reign of Queen Anne has generally been marked out as the Augustan age of English genius. The justice of this distinction we are certainly authorized to dispute; for eminent judges may be found, who assert that the reign of Charles 2d. * deserves the title; and indeed, if the decision rested solely on the merits of these two periods, strong arguments might be adduced, which would incline us to favor the claims of the latter. But the present Essay goes farther, and *attempts* to prove that succeeding ages have equal pretensions with the reign of Anne; and that we have no just reason to suppose the Augustan age has even yet arrived.

* Then flourished Boyle, Halley, Hooker, Sydenham, Harvey, Temple, Tillotson, Barrow, Butler, Cowley, Waller, Dryden, Otway, Milton, &c.

There are many advocates for the reign of Elizabeth.

The

The general reception, with which the idea of Anne's being the Augustan age has met, may be thought some argument for the justice of it. The prejudice certainly has prevailed, and many writers have sanctioned it by adopting the expression without examining its truth. But the origin of the prejudice may, perhaps without difficulty, be explained; if we consider that the Authors, who had written before this period, were of such a stern cast as to require the study of the scholar rather than arrest the general attention: they were aloof from the influence of time or season; they wrote not for a nation of readers.—But when the popular mind, which had hitherto been distracted, had at length gained repose; when, after the Revolution, the benign influence of liberty began to spread; the national manners became more polished. The Authors, who then arose, partook of the national character, and their works wore the fa-

shion of the times. They were adorned with the milder graces of composition: by blending amusement with instruction they insinuated themselves into the favour of their readers, and formed a rational entertainment in the social scenes of domestic life. The consequences have been, that the teachers of the youth of the present day received into their hands at an early age the works, which were written at the beginning of this century; and that we have imbibed from our teachers the reverence, which we pay them. They, who have since themselves adorned literature, are not willing to be ungrateful to those Authors from whom they learned the graces of composition; they quote them, admire and praise them; they are prevented by many prejudices from forming an accurate estimation of contemporary merit; and therefore direct us to their own teachers as models. We accordingly have formed our conceptions by them;

them; and they have become our standard of excellence. While we are admiring them we forget the illustrious names of the present age: so, while the sun is shining, perhaps, in his meridian splendor, we still dwell on the beauties of the morning.

It is not the intention of the following essay to enter into a comparison of the distinct merits of each Author; for how could this be done, or by what rule could they be measured? but to shew that the balance is at least even; and, if we should be induced to hesitate on which side it ought to preponderate, the victory is gained: who would not decide in that manner, which might do the most honour to the genius of his countrymen!

If a person more advanced in years should venture to decide, we may fairly suppose that he is prejudiced; that, having proceeded in a favourite track, he looks back only in one point of view, and

regards every deviation as a wandering from the right way : he is likely to dread innovation : It is not therefore presumption in a younger person to declare, that, whenever he wanted instruction, he found it from Authors of every period of this Century ; that amidst the profusion he hardly knew where to gather ; but wherever he did, was satisfied.

Though Literature admits of a division into Theology—Natural, Moral and Political Philosophy,—Criticism, Metaphysics, History, the Belles Lettres, and Poetry ; yet the Literature in the reign of Anne comes within a narrower compass. The names of that age were Shaftsbury, Bolingbroke, Clarke, Bentley, Congreve, Cibber, Rowe, Young, Pope, Steele, Swift and Addison. In a phalanx they may appear formidable ; but it may be weakened by separation.

We

We may safely concur with a critic of the present age * in wondering how Shaftsbury "ever came to be a Philosopher in vogue, and declare that an interval of eighty years has destroyed the charm." If the works of Bolingbroke † are now ever read, it is for the beauties only of their declamatory style. In this respect surely it will be doing him too much honour to bring in competition with him the name of Burke, an Author (I use the language of one of his political adversaries ‡) of the "most splendid and unequalled powers; the fascination and magic of whose eloquence cannot be withstood. His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches

* See Johnson's Life of Gray.

† For the best description of the character of Bolingbroke's works, see Burke's Preface to a Vindication of Natural Society.

‡ Hall's Apology for the Freedom of the Press.

"from

“from every scene of the creation and
 “every walk of art. His images are so
 “select, so rich with colours dipt in hea-
 “ven, that whoever can read his works
 “without rapture may have merit as a
 “reasoner, but must resign all preten-
 “sions to taste and sensibility.”

We may acknowledge with due respect the abilities of Dr. Clarke as a metaphysician, a critic, a mathematician, and a Divine; but can we place his metaphysical researches above those of Baxter, Hume, Hartley, and Priestley? Can we rank his mathematical abilities above those of Mac-laurin, Smith, and Ferguson? Has religion been more benefited by his works, than by those of Jortin, Leland, † Newton, Warburton, and Paley? ‡ We may

† See the Editor's (i. e. Dr. Parr's) Preface to the Two Traſts of a Warburtonian, where the characters of Jortin and Leland are amply and beautifully delineated. P. 193.

‡ To these might be added the names of Lowth, Blair, Jebb, White, Ogden, Horne.

grant in their full force the acuteness and learning of Bentley; but we may at the same time assert that *real* learning has been equally advanced by the investigations of Lowth, Pearce, Parr, Porson, Harris, Tyrwhit, the Wartons, and Bryant.

However, let us hasten to the mention of those writers, who certainly stand in the foreground of the picture. For who can deny that when we speak of the Augustan age of Anne, we speak of those who distinguished themselves in Poetry and the Belles Lettres?

The inferiority of the Dramatic genius of succeeding periods must be allowed. The tragic powers of Rowe, and Young have not since been surpassed; and no one Author of a later period can be brought forward, who can *individually* produce equal pretensions to comic humour and brilliancy of wit with Steele, Cibber, and Congreve. But from the pens of Thom-

son, Maſon, Home, Kelly, and Sheridan we can boaſt of ſingle productions, which have equal claims to the firſt rank of Dramatic compoſition, and of which, in general, we have more reaſon to be proud from their tendency to promote virtue.

Prior cannot be placed in the firſt rank of Engliſh Poets. Rowe has been already mentioned as a Dramatic poet, and to his merit in that line every praiſe may be added for his tranſlation of Lucan, which a tranſlation can deſerve. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that to the wide and grand diſplay of original Poetry in the Night Thoughts of Young, “morality and religion are indebted.”* In ſuch a Poet any nation or age might deſervedly exult. But the chief claim of Anne’s reign to Poetical honour has generally been reſted on the genius of Pope. Whatever production is not of invention cannot entitle it’s Au-

* Johnſon’s Life of Young.

thor to the first rank of genius; and the grand work of Pope, his translation of Homer, is of this description. The Rape of the Lock may give him the strongest claim to immortality, yet even in this Poem the *Wit* seems to be more apparent than the *Poet*. It has been disputed whether he might be called a Poet. In what rank behind the first he deserves to be placed may with more justice be questioned. In Pope we find little that breathes of

Love, and beauty, and poetic joy,
And inspiration.

He merits the praise of having † “tuned the English tongue:” but the end of Poetry is to delight, meliorate, elevate, and amend the *heart*. Pope wrote chiefly to the *head*; and this distinction, joined with originality of thought, entitles many of the Poets, who have succeeded him to an order above him.

† Johnson's life of Pope.

Let us look around on nature with the eye of Thomson, and see nature herself improved:—let us with Akenfide become alive to all the impressions of natural and moral beauty:—let us be elevated by the ‡ sublimity of Collins, or roused by the || energy of Gray:—let the finer feelings be awakened by §§ Bowles to a degree of even painful sensibility:—let us melt in sympathy with the Scottish * Bard, while he sings the ‡ “ loves, the joys, the rural scenes, and rural pleasures of his natal soil:”—above all, let our souls be enlarged to every liberal sentiment, and our *hearts*

‡ See particularly his Ode on the Poetical character.

|| This expression seems most appropriate to his best productions, the Elegy, Ode to Adversity, &c.

§§ Author of Sonnets, Address to the Philanthropic Society, and other Poems exquisitely pathetic, and *perfectly original*. Next to Pathos dignified simplicity seems the leading feature of his works.

* Burns.

‡ See the Preface of his Poems.

improved

improved by Cowper: †—then let us dare to lament that Poetic genius is fled with Pope!

Would that “chill Penury” had not “frozen the genial current of his soul,” and that it were in our power to *boast* of this age having produced a Chatterton! There is no occasion for us to join in the many unqualified praises, which have been bestowed upon this unfortunate youth, and assert that || “no such human being

† To the abovementioned names others may be added—

“Thick as Autumnal leaves that strew the brook

“In Valombrofa.”

Viz. Glover, Beattie, the Wartons, Churchill, Goldsmith, Armstrong, Falkener, Maſon, Barbauld, Seward, Smith, Darwin, and the Author of the Pleasures of Memory, and Hurdis the Author of Sir Thomas Moore, a tragedy written in the genuine ſpirit of Poetry.

|| See Love and Madneſs, the Author of which is the only one, who has done real juſtice to Chatterton’s memory. The generality of the critics, who argue againſt the authenticity of the Poems, examine into the *forgery*, find poor Chatterton *guilty*, and feel themſelves compelled to *condemn* him to eternal fame.

“ has ever been known, or possibly ever
 “ will be ;” but we may with confidence
 aver, that his Poems are in no wise inferior
 to the most finished productions, and that
 in the universality of his genius he is per-
 haps second only to Shakspeare. “ Where
 “ (exclaims a *Moralist) where were ye,
 “ O ye friends to genius, when, stung with
 “ disappointment, †distressed for food and
 “ raiment, poor Chatterton sunk in des-
 “ pair? Alas! ye knew him not then!”
 He might have added: Alas! they* who
 did

* Knox.

† The original has it thus, “ distressed for food and rai-
 ment, with every frightful form painted on his fine imagina-
 tion,” &c. Surely this latter sentence weakens rather than
 strengthens the description. In his last lamentable state we
 feel for Chatterton as a man more than as a Poet.

* Chatterton presented part of his Poems to Mr. Wal-
 pole, who immediately perceived that they were *forgeries*. He
 kept them in his possession till after his return from France,
 when he received a letter from Chatterton, demanding his
 property in “ a style so singularly impertinent” that he
 “ wrapped

did know him, whose *learning* could inform them, that the Poems were the offspring of his own Muse, were dead to the impression of their superior beauties: their hearts had been rendered too callous by the pusillanimous prejudice, that the Augustan age of genius was past.

Before we proceed to the merits of Swift and Addison, permit the question to be stated, whether in addition to the reasons for our admiration of them, which have already been produced, the consequence, which they assume to themselves, may

"wrapped up his poems, sent them to him, and thought no more about him or them." He afterwards heard that Chat-
terton had destroyed himself; which awakened him to such contrition, that the Author of the Castle of Otranto wished he had been a "*dupe* to him."

See Walpole's letter in his own defence, where in arguing against the authenticity of the Poems, he shews his abilities at the expence of his heart.

Mr. Walpole exhibited the Poems to Mr. Gray and Mr. Mason, when these *excellent* and *impartial* judges agreed they were modern productions. See Gregory's life of Chatterton. p. 63.

may not be another? We see Swift ridiculing the profoundest Philosophers of his time ; and were we to judge from particular parts of their writings, we might be led to conceive, that the world around them was in a state of barbarism. In some passages even of Addison's writings it requires no stretch of imagination to *perceive the master instructing his pupils, rather than the man arguing with men.

When we consider Swift as an Author, it is fair to estimate his powers by their effects, and in his political pieces they appear to have been great : but we are to consider also, that no small part of their efficacy was supplied by the passions of the readers : If we judge them by their internal excellence, very many of the pamph-

* No particular passage can be selected which will prove this. Perhaps Dr. Johnson could not bring forward any one line to justify his assertion, when he said, speaking of Milton's *Allegro*, that he was afraid he "met melancholy in his mirth."

lets, which are continually issuing from the press appear to deserve equal credit : we will name only the letters of Junius, and the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, of *MacIntosh. The force and spirit of Swift's wit was of the highest rank ; but our day has produced geniuses as original in the walks of humour ; and, since it is impossible to define wit, or to estimate it by any rules of composition, we have no right to condemn the taste of those, who prefer the humour of Sterne, or †Walcot, to the tale of a tub, or the adventures of Gulliver.

We will readily grant Addison his full praise ; that he enchants us with all the polite and elegant graces of wit, and all the attractions of moral beauty ; that his

* To these we may add the *Calm Observer*, the Pamphlet of Jasper Wilson, Hall's *Apology for the Freedom of the Press*, Flower on the French Constitution, Fox's *Letter to the Electors of Westminster*, &c. &c. &c.

† Peter Pindar.

papers

papers in that celebrated work the Spectator are eminently beautiful. In this mode of writing he has had many followers, who tread close in his steps. The Connoisseur, the World, the Adventurer, the Essays of Goldsmith, the * Mirror, the Idler, and the Rambler, have had perhaps equal effect in combating by wit or reason the reigning follies, and vices of the nation. We may acknowledge the exquisite powers of Addison in describing life and manners: but the delicate humour, with which he has drawn a few characters cannot be placed in competition with the truth of expression and force of colouring, with which modern manners are painted in the † Novels of Goldsmith, Smollet, and Fielding. It must not be ranked with the

* Particularly the papers by Mackenzie, who has justly been called the Addison of the North.

† We might add particularly the sentimental Novels by Pratt and Mackenzie; the Novels also of Charlotte Smith, Burney, Ratcliffe, Reeve.

sublimity

sublimity and pathos of Richardson, who has created a new species of fiction, and in scenes fully worthy of Shakspeare has exhibited the deformity of vice and the beauty of virtue.

Fabulous narration, however, cannot so strongly interest the mind and heart of men, as History and Biography, in which real incidents are recorded and real characters delineated. The deficiency of English Literature, in each of these branches, was notorious, till Hume, Lyttelton, Robertson, and Gibbon in the one, and Johnson in the other so nobly filled up the chasm. To dwell on the merits of these writers is needless.

Swift, in the reign of Anne, in vain attempted to promote an academy for the regulation of the English language: which * "while it had been employed in
"the cultivation of every science, and

* See Johnson's preface to his Dictionary.

“every branch of literature, had itself “been neglected;” and so it remained ’till its construction became in great measure defined by the investigations of Harris and of Lowth. At length Johnson, whom we have already celebrated as a Moralist and Biographer; and whose refinement of taste, solidity of judgment, powers of argumentation, and compass and energy of diction, as a reasoner, and as an orator were no less astonishing, who among the sons of genius is himself a host, completed his Herculean exploits by that stupendous work the English Dictionary.*

In the reign of Anne one man existed, whose name only need be mentioned to inspire reverence.—Newton. But we have no more reason to call Anne’s reign

* Great and indefatigable as the labours of Johnson were, they have not deterred genius from attempting farther advances. Mr. Took in his *Diversions of Purley* has pointed out, and has himself proceeded far in a path hitherto untrodden, and evidently leading to improvements, by which the science of grammar may be established on a sure basis.

the Augustan age on this account, than we have to stile the reign of Elizabeth so, because it produced a Shakspeare, or that of Charles, because it was honoured by a Milton. As comets among the heavenly bodies, so are beings of such genius among things human,—reduceable to no system.

Even in the science of * Astronomy this age has not fallen off; its perfection was not completed by Newton; the knowledge of it, as far as he advanced, is still kept up, and has even been increased by later discoveries; and when we take into view the whole circle of the † arts and sciences, Painting, Music, Sculpture, Engraving,

* Of the present day, Maskelyne, and Wales.

Vine, Warren

† Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, West, Opie, Copley, —Avifon, Arne,—Bacon, Banks, Nollkens,—Sharpe, Strange, Woollett, Sherwin, Heath,—Priestley, Franklin, Cavallo,—Priestley, Watson, Black,—Cullen, Warren, Baker, Reynolds,—Hunter, Potts,—Tull, Young,—Herschell, Arkwright, Wedgwood, and the inventors of steam-engines,—Cook.

Electricity, Chemistry, Medicine, Anatomy, Agriculture, Mechanics, and Navigation, the superiority of succeeding ages has been so great, that to enter into the comparison would be the insolence of triumph.

From the above view of the question it will not perhaps be thought an unfair statement to say—that succeeding periods have excelled the reign of Queen Anne in Metaphysics, have equalled it in Criticism, and surpassed it in Grammatical knowledge; have excelled it in Divinity and in Moral Philosophy; have been rather inferior in the Drama: in Poetry have been fully equal: in the Belles Lettres equal; superior in Comic Romance and the Epic of modern life (for * such the works of Richardson may be called); have been very superior in History and Biography; and in the Arts and Sciences have gone far beyond it.

* See Russell's Modern Europe.

When we meet the assertion in any writer, that the reign of Anne was the Augustan period of English genius, and can perceive that it proceeded from an envy of contemporary merit, let us pass it with its deserved contempt: but when we see more enlarged minds adopting the prejudice, when we know that the declaration has been made from a persuasion that the human intellect like the human body after a certain degree of vigour must sink to decay, that human societies after a certain pitch of civilization must revert towards barbarism; may we repel the degrading idea with indignation; may we shun it as a narrowness of conception, which would check every exertion of mind; may we dread it as a mildew, under which every blossom of rising genius must sicken, and die.

With this prejudice mankind in every age have been unaccountably infected. It was in consequence of this prejudice that,
long

long before the reign of Anne, Milton was under apprehension least his poem had been produced "in days too late for * admiration, if not for excellence." It has been in consequence merely of this prejudice, that the term Augustan has since been applied to any *one* particular period in the English history. If we examine, we shall perceive, that English genius, which first shone distinctly forth after the Reformation, has proceeded in constant order; that, since the happy perfection of our liberal liberty at the Revolution, the links of the grand chain have followed in a close and regular succession, which is not at *this moment* interrupted. The public edifices of the present day are raised by a Wyatt, are adorned with the sculpture of a Bacon, and with the paintings of a Westall. On our theatre we

* It is curious to observe that a critic in the reign of Anne first introduced Milton's works to general taste.

have a Siddons,—at our bar an Erskine,—
 in our House of Representatives a Fox,—
 in our closets a Cowper,—in our schools a
 Paley,—in our Sacred Temple a Porteus.

Nor have we any reason to think that
 the succession *will* ever be interrupted;
 or that the Augustan age (if we must
 submit to the term) has yet arrived. We
 can have no right to decide concerning the
 future by what has happened. The
 relapse of antient nations into barbarism
 may be attributed to the imperfect diffu-
 sion of knowledge at the time; but the
 invention of printing, and the general
 information in consequence of it through
 all ranks of men, by teaching the ruder
 classes what is useful in society, by fur-
 nishing the people with such means of
 defence as may bid defiance to the incur-
 sions of barbarians, and at the same time
 by spreading civilization among these
 barbarians themselves, may prevent the
 subversion.

subversion of present nations.*——When the wide spread of knowledge in the present day is compared with its extent in the reign of Anne; that age appears to have been an age of half refinement. Even the Ethical writers, who then flourished, taught only the lesser moral duties. Now are our views directed to a wider scope, and our attention is excited by such † writers as Blackstone, Ferguson, Smith, and Paley, to that description of Ethics, which have for their aim the grand good of the species. The bold spirit of investigation is awakened: let but a Political, or Moral doubt be started, and innumerable disputants immediately swarm from the press, who examine it with a clearness of reasoning and freedom of thought, which tends

* For the train of expression in the above paragraph the writer is indebted to the Cabinet, an ingenious periodical work now publishing.

† To these we may add the names of Hartley, Reid, Priestley, Godwin, and Gisborne.

to enlighten the human mind, and invigorate the human character. The powers of the mind are universally called forth ; civilization moves quickly on, and how far it * may proceed we cannot pretend to describe ; but if we look back upon man as he was in his original state, and consider what he now is, we may form a distant conjecture what he may be.—Let us then not look back on any past age without a view to future improvement : let us not say that the period of genius is past ; but let us assert that the time may yet come, let us be bold to say that the time assuredly shall come, when every species of Science and Knowledge shall be brought to perfection, and when the System of social happiness shall be complete ; for that the human mind

Still greatly dares sublimest aims to scan,
 Ennobles science and enriches man,
 Unveils the semblance, which its God bestows,
 And draws more near the fount, from whence it flows.†

* See this idea treated more largely in Godwin's Political Justice.

† Richard's Aboriginal Britons.

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Te conviva leget misto quincunce : sed ante

Incipiat positus quam tepuisse calix :

Esse tibi tanta cautus brevitare videris :

Hei mihi quam multis sic quoque longus eris.



MART.

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